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RUEHGH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0373
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 0126
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5231
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0120
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0237
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TAGS: [EWWT](#) [ETRD](#) [AMGT](#) [PTER](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN CONCERNED WITH NEW U.S. MARITIME CARGO
SCANNING REQUIREMENTS
REF: STATE 119837

11. (SBU) Summary. Although GOS officials are in favor of increasing security measures at Spanish ports, they are concerned that their ports will be unable to comply with the new scanning requirements mandated under Title XVII of the 9/11 Act. Spanish officials have told Post that the requirement to x-ray 100 percent of U.S.-bound cargo would be both time and cost prohibitive. In response, EconOff has drawn from the reftel points, highlighting the President's desire to ensure the workability of the cargo scanning provisions in a way that increases homeland security while ensuring the continuance of vital commerce. GOS officials have expressed appreciation for the information, but say they will continue to coordinate with other EU countries to craft a common stance in opposition to these new requirements. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Over the past several weeks, officials from Spanish Customs as well as from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Works' Port Safety Directorate have told Embassy officers that they are concerned with the feasibility of implementing the 9/11 Act's cargo scanning provisions, particularly the requirement to x-ray all of U.S.-bound cargo. Drawing from Spain's experience with the Container Security Initiative (CSI), Spanish Customs representatives have pointed out that the process of x-raying cargo is not a quick one, and takes several minutes per container to complete. Given the number of containers that come through Spanish ports, customs officials believe that the time, personnel, and equipment needed to identify and x-ray all U.S.-bound cargo (instead of the targeted screening that currently takes place in major Spanish ports) would be time and cost prohibitive.

13. (SBU) Ignacio Gonzalez, Spanish Customs' Assistant Director for Customs Surveillance, has noted that scanning for illicit nuclear or other radioactive material would be logistically more feasible than 100 percent x-raying, although still a costly endeavor. He explained that with the purchase of enough Megaports radiation detection portals, trucks could theoretically drive large volumes of cargo on their way in and out of ports without significant delays.

14. (SBU) Pedro Roman, Director for Port Security at the

Ministry of Infrastructure, repeated these concerns in a conversation with EconOff October 24. He stated that all EU countries were opposed to these measures and that Spain was in the process of working with the EU to craft a common stance. He added that he would be participating in EU discussions on this common position, the next meeting of which is scheduled in Brussels the week of November 5.

15. (SBU) In response to the various concerns raised, EconOff has drawn from reftel talking points, noting that in signing the law, the President stated that he will continue to work with Congress to ensure the workability of the cargo screening provisions in a way that increases our vigilance on homeland security while ensuring the continuance of vital commerce. EconOff has also noted that the Act provides the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security the

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flexibility to seek extensions of the 2012 deadline until the specific conditions necessary for a full deployment can be met.

16. (SBU) Spanish officials have attempted to clarify that although the GOS is opposed to the cargo scanning provisions of this law, it is supportive of the principle of increased security. Ignacio Gonzalez from Spanish Customs explained to Embassy officers that GOS is in favor of additional security measures at Spanish ports, and is seeking to expand the Megaports initiative to detect illicit radioactive material. He added that three of the most heavy volume ports in Spain - Barcelona, Valencia, and Algeciras - were actively participating in targeted cargo screening efforts undertaken via the Container Security Initiative (CSI).

17. (SBU) Comment: Post will continue to engage with the GOS on this issue. So far, the only complaints heard about this initiative have come from GOS officials, although we expect members of the local maritime and business community to also add their views following the October 25 Financial Times

articles on these new measures.

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